

TRENDS IN RESEARCH FOR THE AREA OF RETAIL MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: *The researcher studies the need of consumers and corporate in market and try to aid them to make better decisions by making them availability of useful surveys and research in their fields. Commerce and Management are huge areas covering many sub areas, which are growing and emerging. The New economic Reforms in 1991, gave Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization, which has changed the trends in Commerce and Management, and so that has changed trends in Research in Commerce and Management. This paper focuses on Retail Management and highlights recent trends in Research for the same. For justifying the subject, we have focused on – Opinions of Research Firms about recent trends, Contribution of Research Firms in Retail Managements' Research, and few review of literature describing trends of Research in Retailing.*

Key Words: *Commerce, Management, Liberalization, Privatization, Globalization, Retail.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

There are so many areas in Commerce and Management, which are emerging day by day. They all gets identified because of research. Researcher provides necessary analysis, conclusions and suggestions related to consumers' responses, perception, habits, attitude, expectations, satisfaction etc. for particular product, brand, corporate etc. This clearly helps to frame future strategies and planning to survive the cut throat competition. So, it's not wrong, if we say, Research is part of today's economy.

2. CONCEPT OF RESEARCH:

Research is the systematic and objective identification, collection, analysis dissemination, and use of information for the purpose of improving decision making related to the identification and solution of problems.

It is the systematic gathering, recording, and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data about issues relating to marketing products and services. The goal of marketing research is to identify and assess how changing elements of the marketing mix impacts customer behavior.

Marketing research is often partitioned into two sets of categorical pairs, either by target market:

Consumer marketing research and Business-to-business (B2B) marketing research

Or, alternatively, by methodological approach:

Qualitative marketing research and Quantitative marketing research

3. CURRENT SCENARIO OF RETAIL IN INDIA:

Retail Management pertains to the task of managing supermarkets and hypermarkets in strict business terms. In India, the retail industry has seen a great upsurge in the past decade. From adopting new marketing strategies to diversifying into businesses, companies have tried all gimmicks to impress the customer. This is one industry that works clearly on the paradigm, "Customer is King". Accordingly, retail management is a subject that requires you to be fully aware of brands, marketing strategies, and retail philosophies behind winning the customer.

The systems these days are super fast and dynamic and totally computerized. Unlike in the past where you had a grocery or a Kirana shop selling you products and commodities at higher prices, now almost everything comes for a discount! It is the sale season for no proper reason! Right from factory outlets to supermarkets, some brand or the other would offer you discounts to beat and win the competition.

Retailing in India is one of the pillars of its economy and accounts for 14 to 15 percent of its GDP. The Indian retail market is estimated to be US\$ 500 billion and one of the top five retail markets in the world by economic value. India is one of the fastest growing retail markets in the world, with 1.2 billion people..

3.1 Market Size

The Indian retail market is expected to touch US\$ 1.3 trillion by 2020 from its existing level of around US\$ 500 billion, according to Mr. KV Thomas, Union Minister for Food and Consumer Affairs.

The foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows in single-brand retail trading during the period April 2000– September 2013 stood at US\$ 97.29 million, as per data released by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP).

3.2 Expansion of Research in Retail Management:

Retail market is very dynamic and has numerous sub-segments within it. Using sophisticated market research techniques that include both qualitative and quantitative methods will improve the chances of success for any retail venture. It is almost impossible to understand your customers without some form of formal research.

3.3 Following are 6 Trends that are Changing Retail:

1. From Amazon to Zalando: Online business is putting pressure on retail stores
2. Cross-channel trade: Order online, exchange in-store
3. Consumers visit local stores for advice and for a unique shopping experience
4. Smartphones, tablets & co.: Mobile devices in-store
5. IT budgets on the rise
6. Analytics: Staying on top of customers with Big Data

The above advancements in Retail calls for diversified research in this field, and it's very natural that Trends in research will also have been changed today. Let's have a look on comparison of Traditional and Modern Retail :

3.4 Traditional Retail Versus Non -Traditional/ Modern Retail

Non-Traditional or Modern Retail Channel refers to all other formats of retail stores like Hyper markets, Department Stores, Discount Stores, Electric Multiple stores, Cash and Carry Stores, Specialty Stores, Online, Direct selling
Now let us make an attempt to differentiate between the two on certain parameters as mentioned below:

1. Presence: Usually Traditional channel has limited geographical presence say within a city or a specific region while Non-Traditional or Modern Channel has national presence.

2. Service: Traditional channel (Example: say a neighbourhood Kirana store) has high involvement with the consumer during the sale is made. It can be even to the level of free home delivery of small value goods bought. However the expectation of the consumer is low in terms of service standards at the time of sale. On the other hand in Modern Retail usually there is low involvement with the consumers on the shop floor. Usually consumers are free to roam around and choose on their own what they wish to buy. Not much personal attention given. At the same time consumer expectations are high.

3. Delivery: There are no strict norms for the delivery of goods from the company to the retailer where as in Modern Retail there are defined delivery norms such as specific time schedule for deliver, barcodes, and delivery to happen before expiry of PO etc

4. Volumes: Traditional trade usually sells/ buys consistent volumes with increase during the season/ festivals while on the other hand modern trade sells/ buys higher volumes throughout the year due to promotions and regular expansions.

5. Promotions: Promotions in traditional channel are usually seasonal while modern retail channel believes in monthly and daily promotions on products.

6. Training of staff: There is a moderate focus on training of staff in traditional trade while modern trade ensures high level of training of their staff.

7. Credit terms: Companies usually give lower credit periods to traditional trade while modern trade enjoys higher credit limits and periods.

8. Relationships: Traditional trade is managed usually on personal relationship of the sales personnel with the owner while the relationship of modern trade with companies is professional and legal

Above difference highlights how Retail Management has been expanded. This clearly shows, the research in the field should also be expanded, Earlier even the distribution channel members were limited, but now, members are increased, and that indicates more surveys are done to reach to conclusions and to judge the correct direction.

4. RECENT TRENDS IN RESEARCH IN RETAIL MANAGEMENT:

4.1 Opinion of Research Firms across globe about current Trends in Research:

4.1.1 Opinion of IMRB International:

Researchers are the Assessors of trend through out the world. Through surveys, polls, market research firms co-operate and help various companies and media to track upcoming trends and look into the future. Their role could not have been more critical in a speedily growing economy where technology, incremental incomes and world/ global exposure is rousing up socio-economic norms at all levels.

Impact of Technology:

Face to Face Interaction lags behind the interaction via phone or internet. For e.g. if face-to-face interview Rs 3 will cost for face to face interview, a phone call costs Rs 1 and internet just 50 paise. But in India, saturation of these technologies is down.

- **Usage level of technologies**

B to B surveys are more preferred to be done via e-mails and it can be useful to monitor response's quality. But it is observed usage of this technology was less than 1% five years ago, while it is less than 5% today.

4.1.2 Opinion of TNS India:

TNS India is the largest customized research company in South Asia and is a part of leading UK based market information group TNS Inc.

- **Research zones:**

The most important growth area for Market Research Industry in India in last few years is media measurement business. Growth is witnessed beyond the traditional FMCG research. Now much impetus on spending for market research is also done by other sectors like Auto, Telecom, Healthcare and Durable Industry. The consumer satisfaction is the prime area focused for research.

- **Research Methodologies and technologies;**

It is been observed that India is becoming an outsourcing centre in the area of market research for the world because of the methodologies and technologies used in research. The only lacking area for India is data collection, as still we are not able to develop the usage of telephone and internet in survey due to low tele density and internet saturation.

- **Change in Research over past years:**

Client expectations have changed a lot in the last five years. Earlier, Research firms were called in and told there is a problem to be solved and later go away. More and more organizations are now realizing that this is not enough.

5. RESEARCH TOOL LAUNCHED BY MARKET XCEL:

Market Xcel is an end-to-end market research firm that provides custom market research solutions, has offices in Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore & Kolkata.

Looking to tap the growing demand for low-cost market research tools in the country, Market Xcel has launched 'Xcel-Omnibus', designed to help marketing professionals, advertising agencies and public relations firms.

The new tool introduced by the market research solutions provider would deliver quick-result small surveys to aid opinion poll conductors, marketing and advertising agencies.

Omnibus Surveys are more suitable for measuring and tracking public opinion, attitudes and behaviour, general brand evaluation, establishing market share and incidence and measuring advertising awareness," Market Xcel CEO, R Vishal Oberoi told media.

Omnibus research would help in asking simple questions that allow people to choose from a list of possible answers and can also handle more complex question style like attitude statements and advertising evaluation.

5.1 Contributions by Research firms in Research in Retail Management:

There are various agencies and Researchers who are contributing a lot in field of Retail, by performing surveys, polls etc. We have compiled various data of research agencies in the world so far, for describing how research in retail has changed today, and how minute and small elements are also considered for surveys in Retail field, which were not taken into account in past: Following are such inputs in Retail :

eMpulse -Retail Market Research in India –White Paper

Data collection needs a lot of experience for conducting retail market research. The appropriate technique needs to be followed. Store intercepts are done to get customer perspectives that are fresh from shopping. Mystery shopping is used to conduct research on experience during a routine day. Customer interviews are conducted to get in-depth understanding.

eMpulse offers full service market research solutions that help you understand the retail markets within India... Some of the services provided by eMpulse in the retail space are;

- Retail customer profiling research
- Brand loyalty research
- Retail catchment area analysis
- Vendor profiling and analysis
- Mystery shopping
- Shopper intercept research

Centre for Retail Research

The Centre for Retail Research provides authoritative and expert research and analysis of the retail and service sectors in Britain, Europe and globally.

Few of key areas of interest include

Retail Forecasts: consumer spending; Christmas and seasonal spending forecasts; the future pattern of stores; payment systems; ethical retailing and green retailing; retail failures,

The Centre's research is widely quoted in Radio, TV stations and renowned Newspapers

GFK Retail

They transform data into market insights and sales forecasts by tracking point-of-sale (POS) data from the world's largest retail network. They also use ad-hoc surveys on consumer behavior in retail, as well as information from their consumer panels.

GFK services cover the following areas of research:

- Retail sales tracking
- Total store performance reporting
- Regional analysis
- Shopper & retail strategy
- International retail scene

National Retail Federation

NRF RESEARCH involves the following areas:

- **Organized Retail Crime**

Annual study among retail executive to assess the impact and severity of organized retail crime

- **Port Tracker**

Monthly report evaluating and monitoring key port data

- **Return Fraud**

Study among loss prevention executives which measures retail industry return fraud

- **Seasonal Shopping Guide**

A list of typical bargains and promotions found in retail stores by calendar month

- **U.S. Retail Compensation & Benefits Survey**

A comprehensive retail-only wage and benefit survey filled with employee relations and store operations data

SHOP.ORG RESEARCH

- **State of Retailing Online**

A comprehensive collection of performance benchmarks for Internet and multichannel retail

- **eHoliday**

Series of surveys exploring the perceptions and practices of retailers and consumers during the holiday season

STORES RESEARCH

- **STORES Favorite 50**

A list of top eCommerce websites as ranked by the consumers who use them

- **STORES Hot 100 Retailers**

A comprehensive list which provides a definitive ranking of the nation's fastest-growing companies

- **STORES Top 100 Retailers**

An annual snapshot of the retail industry, ranking companies by revenue

- **Global Powers of Retailing Top 250**

A report featuring the top 250 retailers around the world

Technopak Advisors Pvt. Ltd.

India's leading management consulting firm with more than 20 years of experience in working with organizations across consumer goods and services. They are having Big client base, where Huge International and National Retailers are involved, with their consumer products.

There are various areas where they offer services, following are the inputs in Retailing from their side:

Retail Analytics

- Customer contact strategy
- Assortment and Store Planning
- Customer Segmentation

- Loyalty Strategy
- Supplier Partnerships
- Private Label Strategy
- Pricing and Promotions

5.2 Below are Few of Literature review which shows the trend of research in Retail today:

Michael Levy, Praveen Kopalle, Dhruv Grewal, James Hess (2007): They have their views on “*Emerging trends in retail pricing practice: Implications for research*” This essay on emerging trends in pricing discusses recent advances in retail pricing optimization. It Begins with a review of how retailers typically make pricing decisions using time-honored heuristics and attempt to infer the optimal decisions. However, current methods are sub-optimal because they do not consider the effects of advertising, competition, substitute products, or complementary products on sales. They described typical factors like Price sensitivity, Substitution effect, Dynamic Effect, Segment based pricing, Cross category effects, Retailer cost, Competition, to be incorporated in Retail pricing.

Piyush Kumar Sinha, Srikant Gokhale, Sujo Thomas (December 2012): Their Paper entitled “*Development of Modern Retailing in India- It’s Impacts on Distribution and Procurement Networks and Changing Consumption Pattern*” attempts to explore the retail industry and evaluate the extent of its impact on distribution and procurement networks and changing consumption pattern in India. They concluded that the modernization process started by large retailers has spread across country. Even smaller independent stores are upgrading in terms of assortments, delivery and ambience.. The modern retailers would like to make substantial savings though efficacy and pass this benefit to producers and end consumers. The Indian retail industry will, however, take a long time and would require a sustained effort before the benefits reach the target due to its own characteristics.

Paras Nath Jha : In his paper entitled “*Global Trends in Retail Management of India*”, he explained the different challenges and strategies involved in Retail Marketing. The study is based on different literature and analysis of organized Retail Market. And strategy, called Retail mix , involves careful consideration of product to sell , location at which to sell , pricing of the product and the appeal that can be generated to attract the consumer’s interest. He explained organized markets’ bifurcation: Supermarkets, Hyper Markets, Departmental Stores, and Specialty Stores. He showed KSF in global market like purchasing power, Retail expertise, IT infrastructure etc are helpful for emerging market.

6. CONCLUSION:

Researchers are the trend assessors of the world. Today Retail is very dynamic and has numerous sub-segments within it. Using sophisticated market research techniques that include both qualitative and quantitative methods will improve the chances of success for any retail venture. Various trends in technology, usage, awareness has changed the Retail Management as well as Research in this field.

To fulfill the need of growing changed Retail Market, and accordingly research has also expanded its scope for it so that firms can survive and cope up this uncertain and cut throat competition. We cannot deny the fact, that “It is almost impossible to understand your customers without some form of formal research.”

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